

EMPOWERING LIVES & HEALING HEARTS: TRANSFORMING MENTAL HEALTH SINCE 1977

**FY 2023
Annual Report**



LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Esteemed Members and Supporters,

I am thrilled to share with you the remarkable strides and unwavering dedication of El Centro de Amistad, Inc. (ECDA) in serving the vibrant community of the San Fernando Valley. As we continue to evolve and adapt to the dynamic needs of our families and individuals, ECDA remains steadfast in our commitment to providing comprehensive and culturally sensitive mental health services.

Since our humble beginnings in 1977, ECDA has stood as a beacon of hope and support for the San Fernando Valley, offering indispensable and culturally competent services that have made a profound impact on countless lives. Through our diverse range of programs, we have not only tackled various risk factors but also fostered the establishment of sustainable family stability, nurturing a community built on resilience and empowerment.

Our growth and impact have been further bolstered by the generous support of our philanthropic and corporate partners. This outpouring of support has not only sustained our initiatives but has paved the way for expanded horizons, promising an even more profound influence within our beloved community. We are thrilled to announce the upcoming support from Cedars and the Mark Taper Foundation, which will fortify our operations and enable us to continue our vital work with renewed vigor and enthusiasm.

One of the most inspiring facets of our journey has been our active engagement with esteemed political representatives and stakeholders, an essential element in amplifying our presence and influence within the community. Meaningful dialogues with notable officials, including Congressman Tony Cardenas, Assemblywoman Luz Rivas, Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor Lindsay Horvath's office, have exemplified our unwavering commitment to championing essential mental health services and fostering robust community support.

As we look towards the future, ECDA remains resolute in our mission to cultivate a resilient, supportive, and empowered community. Through our persistent advocacy, strategic partnerships, and heartfelt community engagement, we are dedicated to shaping a brighter and more inclusive future for all individuals and families under our care. Together, let us continue to build a community that thrives on compassion, understanding, and unwavering support.

With gratitude and enthusiasm,

A stylized, dark ink signature of Luis Cervantes.

Luis Cervantes
ECDA Executive Director

A stylized, dark ink signature of Danitza Pantoja.

Danitza Pantoja
ECDA Board Chair

OUR HISTORY

An extraordinary milestone of securing a \$1 million contract aimed at delivering essential services to the youth of Canoga Park was reached following a meeting with two dedicated local advocates. Dr. Tomas Martinez, the visionary behind El Centro de Amistad, vividly reminisces about the agency's inception back in 1977. During that time, the community grappled with pressing challenges, including a surge in gang-related activities, which took a particularly heavy toll on the predominantly Latino families already burdened by unemployment, crime, poverty, and drug abuse. In response to these critical issues, concerned residents, with the invaluable support of San Fernando Mental Health Centers Inc. and their board of directors, united with Dr. Martinez to establish El Centro de Amistad.

Collaborating with Tarzana Treatment Center staff, they provided supervision for El Centro de Amistad's substance abuse services, guided by a community advisory board. In 1984, El Centro de Amistad Inc. officially became a non-profit with its own board of directors. With the backing of then-supervisor Michael Antonovich, the agency secured a \$68,000 contract from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Services, offering community mental health outreach services and substance abuse treatment to at-risk, gang-involved youth.

Today, El Centro de Amistad has grown, employing over 80 staff members. Initially focused on at-risk, gang-involved youth with substance abuse services, their programs have expanded to provide comprehensive, culturally sensitive mental health services, including case management, medication support, counseling, and assessment, benefiting over 110,000 individuals.

The agency continues its commitment to serving children, youth, and empowering individuals for a brighter future, driven by the dedication of its board, staff, and the community.



El Centro de Amistad, Inc. is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a comprehensive range of mental health services to low-income families and individuals in the San Fernando Valley. El Centro de Amistad, Inc. is committed to assisting children, adults, and families.

Our Mission

El Centro de Amistad, Inc., is a multilingual, cross-cultural organization providing a comprehensive range of mental health services, anticipating the ever-changing needs of families and individuals in the San Fernando Valley. El Centro de Amistad, Inc. is committed to assisting children, adults, and families.

OUR PROGRAMS

1,386

Individuals, children,
and families served.

2,427

Relative Caregiver
Training Hours provided
to caregivers.

1,020

On average, our mental
health providers see
37 clients a year for an
average of 1020 hours of
individual and/or group
therapy/counseling.

**Programs are geared toward low-income consumers. ECDA accepts Medi-Cal, Medi-Cal Expansion (MCE), and Managed Care Health Insurance Plan (MCHIP) coverage as applicable. Services are provided virtually, in the office, home, school, and community settings. - Limited funding is available for uninsured consumers.*

Department of Mental Health (DMH) Programs:

Children and Adult Outpatient Programs provide ongoing mental health services to individuals from birth to older adulthood. The goal of the Outpatient Program is to stabilize clients' mental health issues, make them more independent, and acquire healthier coping skills to function better socially, emotionally, and behaviorally within the home, work environment, school, and community settings. Services may include individual, family, group therapy, case management, rehabilitation, peer support, and medication support.

Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) Program is a collaboration between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and community-based mental health provider agencies. It is designed to ensure the immediate and comprehensive assessments of children and youth entering out-of-home placement. The assessment is meant to help a family meet the needs that the child(ren) may have

that place the family in danger of a lengthy separation.

CalWORKS Program provides mental health services, medication support, individualized employment services, case management, peer advocacy, and outreach to address mental health issues that are barriers to employment. Participants are over 18 years old and live and care for their children. Referrals are provided by the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) GAIN Program.

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Programs:

Family Preservation (FP) provides strength-based collaborative services aimed at helping families who are referred from DCFS to identify and build upon existing strengths; resolve child safety concerns; advocate for their children at school and in other

public settings; and expand, or establish, the family's connection to resources and support in the community.

Relative Home Assessment Services (RHAS) is a family-friendly and child-centered caregiver approval

process for children removed from their homes and in need of a safe placement with a relative caregiver. RHAS is a collaborative program between DCFS and ECDA which unifies approval standards for all caregivers, regardless of the child's case plan.

Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Funded

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Program provides evidence-based mental health services to infants and children aged 0-12, focusing primarily on the 0-5 population.

Mental Health Consultation and training services are offered to 0-5 providers, the community, families, and mental health workers. The program's goal is to educate the community on 0-5 and

childhood issues, enhance an infant's and child's mental health, improve social and emotional development, and reduce risk, particularly for those who have experienced trauma.

OUR SERVICES

Mental Health - Assessments, treatment planning, individual, family, and group therapy, collateral, and rehabilitative and Community Outreach Services (COS) are provided to qualifying consumers. Treatment is evidence-based and individualized according to symptoms, culture, situation, and age.

Case Management - Linkage and referrals, advocacy, and supportive services to access medical, educational, social, vocational, community, and rehabilitative needs are provided for qualifying consumers.

School-Linked - Mental health, case management, consultation, and supportive services are provided on-campus to students meeting criteria within specific contracted LAUSD and Charter schools within the San Fernando Valley.

Medication Support - Assessment, follow-up, and prescription of psychotropic medication services are provided by a licensed psychiatrist as needed to consumers who qualify for services.

Peer Support - An ECDA Peer Partner with lived mental health experience

provides non-clinical strength-based support and advocacy to current ECDA consumers. Services include outreach and engagement, education and linkage to tools and resources, and other types of assistance.

Employment Services - Employment and training services to current and former CalWORKS recipients are provided by our Employment Specialist (ES). The ES also provides coaching support and assistance with setting short- and long-term employment goals.

Family Preservation (FP) In-Home Outreach Counseling Services (IHOC) - The FP IHOC provides counseling, parenting classes, child-focused activities, mentoring, case management, and teaching and demonstrating to program participants.

Relative Home Assessment Services (RHAS) - Comprehensive psychosocial assessment, home orientation/home environment check, and training are provided for all families in RHAS.

Infant Massage (IM) - IM is designed to provide short-term services for infants 0-6 months aimed to support the infant's development through caregiver

bonding and attachment. Sessions are baby-driven; Caregivers are encouraged to respond to their infant's needs. Trained IM therapists focus on providing individual support to families affected by trauma.

Free Legal Clinic - ECDA's Legal Clinic is a privately funded program that provides free legal assistance in civil cases to ECDA clients.

Mental Health Consultation - A problem-solving and capacity-building intervention implemented within a collaborative relationship between a professional consultant with mental health expertise and one or more caregivers, typically an early care and education provider and/or family member. Early childhood mental health consultation aims to build the capacity (improve the ability) of staff, families, programs, and systems to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of mental health problems among children from birth to age 6 and their families. (Adapted from Cohen & Kaufmann, 2000)

Training - Our IECMH Program offers free training to the community on 0-5 age issues including Trauma, Child Development, Cultural Issues, etc.



28,099

Mental Health Service hours provided to individuals and families.

656

Case Management hours provided to individuals and families.

266

Med Support hours provided to individuals and families.

All services are offered in English and Spanish and are subject to criteria and capacity.

According to the CDC,
more than

**10 million
adults**

experience domestic
violence annually in the
United States.

Only

**34% of
people**

who are injured by intimate
partners receive medical
care for their injuries.



Scan here for
more of our client's
success stories.



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

Jane, a resilient mother of two, has triumphed over adversity by successfully completing mental health treatment at El Centro de Amistad. Her journey with us began in February when she was referred by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) due to intimate partner violence in her home. Jane took the courageous step of reporting the violence to local authorities, prompting DCFS's involvement in an effort to stabilize her family.

At the outset, Jane and her children grappled with emotional and psychological challenges. The transition to a new home environment, coupled with Jane's role as a single mother, presented significant hurdles. Consequently, her children initiated therapy, and Jane herself engaged in a parenting program. Jane's active participation allowed her to gain valuable insights into fostering healthy communication with her children. She also committed to court-ordered programs, enrolling in a 16-week intimate partner violence support group for victims with Miracles Counseling Center. Through this, she acquired knowledge about the cycle of intimate partner violence and identifying red flags in a relationship. Jane's brave decision to break free from the abuse marked the first step in recognizing the need for change.

During her In-Home Outreach Counseling sessions, Jane addressed parenting skills and learned appropriate methods for discipline and managing her children's challenging behaviors. The program also delved into the impact of trauma on children's

behavior, teaching Jane how to make her children feel secure through presence and open communication. Over time, Jane made remarkable progress in her communication with her children and enhanced her parenting skills. Her stress levels reduced significantly as she gained knowledge about child development and acquired skills through her participation in parenting classes. This, in turn, helped her children feel both physically and emotionally secure in their relationship with their mother, aiding in their adjustment to her role as their sole primary caregiver. Jane's In-Home Outreach Counselor (IHOC) observed her growing flexibility and commitment, ensuring that her

children attended various service provider appointments while balancing her own court-mandated services. Jane's dedication and commitment are evident in her remarkable progress and personal growth.

Jane is deeply grateful for the Family Preservation services she received at El Centro de Amistad. She acknowledges that these services have allowed her to forge a stronger bond with her family while gaining confidence and emotional stability. Jane stands as an inspiring example for others confronting similar challenges. With determination and the right support, anyone can create their own success story.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, economic, and emotional/psychological abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence varies dramatically.

— *National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

Support:

If you are in crisis, contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or www.TheHotline.org. Or Text START to 88788



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

El Centro de Amistad (ECDA) is committed to the San Fernando Valley community by providing essential mental health services and family support for nearly five decades. This long-standing dedication speaks to the organization's values and mission to make a positive impact on the lives of children, adults, and families in the area. Community engagement and philanthropy are essential for creating a supportive and caring environment. By actively participating in giving back initiatives, ECDA helps bridge gaps in the community, fosters a sense of togetherness, and brings happiness to those who may be facing difficult circumstances.



Back to School Event

One of El Centro de Amistad's key priorities is organizing events that contribute to our community. As National Back-to-School Month approached swiftly, ECDA conducted its annual back-to-school distribution event on July 28, 2022. The primary objective of this event was to collect sufficient supplies to support the children of ECDA families, equipping them with the necessary tools for a successful academic journey. School supplies hold immense significance in education, influencing students' growth and development. Access to all the required materials provides a sense of security and enhances their academic performance. This aided parents in better preparing their children for the upcoming school year and brought joy to both parents and children within our community.



With the generous support of sponsors like the Perez family, ECDA staff, and the business and tax consultants from SLTG, LLP, we were able to furnish over 250 backpacks filled with school essentials to families who had been identified as needing assistance. Each ECDA child and their siblings received the fundamental items necessary for the upcoming school year.

El Centro de Amistad's team organized distribution events at both their East and West Valley offices. The parents and children expressed heartfelt gratitude for these donations, with one parent stating, "We are thankful for all these donations as they help us save money on our daughter's school supplies." El Centro de Amistad was delighted to witness the positive impact of the back-to-school event.



Thanksgiving Event

We want to extend our deepest and most sincere thanks for the incredible support that made our annual Thanksgiving Food Drive a tremendous success. This year, we had the privilege of providing a complete Thanksgiving meal to 90 families from our Canoga Park and San Fernando locations. Each family received a beautiful holiday basket filled with non-perishable items and a \$50 grocery gift card to purchase a turkey.

We couldn't have achieved this without the unwavering support of our generous sponsors: SLTG, LLP, our dedicated ECDA team, Chaminade College Preparatory, our esteemed Board Members, and our community. Your kindness and dedication have made a significant difference in the lives of those we serve. The holiday season can be a challenging time for many, and your contributions brought comfort and joy to our ECDA families.



Christmas Event

El Centro de Amistad recently organized a heartwarming holiday event for 85 local families, held in December 2022. Families were welcomed with snacks and a visit from Santa, who brought joy to the children. The event was part of their "Adopt-A-Family" program, supporting families facing challenges such as low income, domestic violence, and more. Community generosity provided thoughtful gifts, making a significant impact during the holiday season. ECDA Board Member Enrique Sanchez emphasized the importance of supporting families during challenging times, expressing gratitude for the community's contributions that spread warmth, hope, and happiness.



Holiday Check Distribution

In the 2022 holiday season, El Centro de Amistad demonstrated its commitment to helping domestic violence survivors facing financial challenges. They surprised two single mothers, Ms. Renteria and Ms. Jimenez, with \$2,000 each to assist with their financial hardships and housing costs during the Adopt-A-Family Campaign event on December 21, 2022. Ms. Renteria and her children had left an abusive relationship and were determined to rebuild their lives, while Ms. Jimenez, also a survivor of domestic violence, was working hard to provide for her family despite recent challenges. These acts of kindness were made possible with the support of board member Enrique Sanchez and his company, SLTG, LLP. This story highlights the importance of community support and the positive impact of organizations like El Centro de Amistad in the lives of those facing significant challenges.

El Centro de Amistad presents
"Intimate Partner Violence Effects and Treatment"
2023 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE MAY 17, 2023 9:00am–12:00pm

---Presenters---



Lorena Belcher



Alina Gonzalez



Alexis Cabrera



We would like to thank you for giving your valuable time and attention during ECDA's Annual Virtual Mental Health Conference titled **From Turmoil to Triumph: "Intimate Partner Violence Effects and Treatment"** that took place on May 17, 2023, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. At this year's conference, we explored topics about the impact and effects of Interpersonal Violence (IPV) on BIPOC families and inherent layers of trauma and strategies for treatment.

We would like to give a special thanks to our key presenter, a Resilience and Transformation Coach, and former AMFT, Miss Lorena Belcher. Also, thank you to El Centro de Amistad Child

Therapists, Alina Gonzalez, M.S., Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and Alexis Cabrera, M.A., Associate Marriage and Family Therapist for facilitating mindful breaks during the conference.

In addition to our wonderful presenters, we would like to also give a special thanks to the Los Angeles Board of Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, SAMHSA, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, along with our ECDA Team and the community for joining us.

We invite you to continue reflecting and having this difficult conversation with others in your community and engage in power with others.

2022-2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Unrestricted Net Assets

Revenues and Other Support

Funding Revenue
Other Revenue

Program Revenue

Department of Mental Health
Department of Children & Family Services
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services
Interest Income

Total Unrestricted Revenues

Expenses

Program
Management and Administration
Fundraising

Total Unrestricted Expenses

Total Increase (Decrease) in Unrestricted Net Assets

Net Assets at Beginning of the Year

Net Assets at End of Year

254,863
1,038,861

5,145,561
1,210,754
609,045
21,864

8,290,947

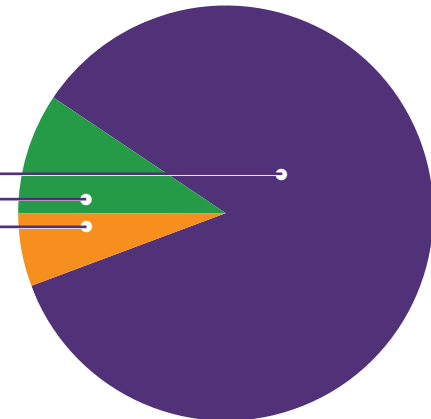
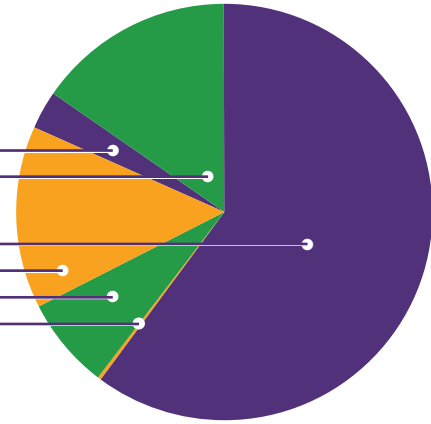
6,301,723
700,191
420,253

7,422,168

868,779

2,851,808

3,720,587



MEET OUR TEAM



Board of Directors

Danitza Pantoja
President

David Moreno
Vice President

Doug Barnett
Board Treasurer

Magali Gallegos
Board Secretary

Justin J. Grooms
Sargent at Arms

Enrique Sanchez
Board Member

Juliana Ocegueda
Board Member

Rich Golisch
Board Member

Meet our Board Secretary

Magali Gallegos

Magali Gallegos is an accomplished banking professional with a career spanning since 1999. Over the past few decades, she has held numerous positions within the banking industry, demonstrating her versatility and expertise. Her roles have involved assisting clients from diverse ethnic and financial backgrounds in meeting their banking and lending needs, underscoring her commitment to providing financial services to a wide range of individuals.

Currently, Magali holds a significant role as a Cash Operations Supervisor at the Federal Reserve. In this capacity, she plays a crucial role in managing and overseeing cash operations, ensuring the efficient functioning of financial transactions within the Federal Reserve system.

Magali's educational background includes an Associate of Arts degree from Glendale Community College in Glendale, California, further highlighting her dedication to personal and professional growth.



In addition to her career in the banking sector, Magali has also been a Notary Public for over 15 years, which adds a valuable dimension to her skillset.

Magali's commitment to giving back to the community is evident in her role as a board member for El Centro De Amistad, a position she assumed in 2021. Her involvement with the organization reflects her desire to contribute to the valuable work done by this remarkable nonprofit, emphasizing her dedication to making a positive impact in the community.

Magali Gallegos' journey exemplifies the power of experience, education, and community involvement in shaping a fulfilling and impactful career. Her contributions to El Centro De Amistad are sure to bring value and support to the organization's mission.

Leadership Highlight

Elizabeth Diaz

Elizabeth, affectionately known as Lizz, is a remarkable individual and a proud first-generation Mexican American who was born and raised in the vibrant San Fernando Valley. From a young age, she learned the profound values of hard work and unwavering loyalty.

Lizz's journey with the ECDA team spans an impressive two decades, beginning in September of 2000. During her tenure with the organization, she has taken on various roles, showcasing her versatility and dedication. She has lent her talents to provide essential administrative support, skillfully coordinated special events, and managed a comprehensive computer program. Through her unwavering commitment and dedication, Lizz has evolved into her current role as the Human Resources Manager, where she plays a crucial part in fostering a positive work environment and supporting the ECDA team.

Lizz's educational background further exemplifies her commitment to personal and professional growth. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business with a concentration in

Human Resources, which she earned from the University of Phoenix. Beyond her professional life, Lizz cherishes her time spent with her daughter and family. She finds joy in a variety of activities, such as going to the movies, indulging in the creativity of canvas painting, and engaging in the mental challenge of puzzle-solving.

Lizz's story is a testament to the power of hard work, dedication, and the pursuit of education, as well as the importance of family and personal passions in leading a fulfilling life. Her presence at ECDA undoubtedly contributes to the organization's success and its mission of making a positive impact on the community.



Leadership Team

Luis Cervantes
Executive Director

Tania Fallert-Del Gatto
Associate Director

Sara Pineda
Program Director

Angie Sanchez
Program Director

Ramon Retirado
Accounting Manager

Iliana Martinez
Quality Assurance Manager

Carla Espinoza-Baires
Information Systems/ IT Manager

Alexandra Baires
Intake Manager

Flaviola Garcia
Community Relations Supervisor

Lizz Diaz
Human Resource Manager

MEET OUR PARTNERS

We are truly grateful for the unwavering support of our partners, who have joined hands with us to empower lives today for a better tomorrow. Their dedication to our cause and vision has been instrumental in extending our reach to diverse communities, all united by a common goal—prioritizing the mental health and well-being of our clients.

In 2022, we witnessed the growth of a vibrant and caring community of partners, and their collective efforts have transformed our missions into a powerful movement. Together, we are working towards a future where mental health takes precedence, where individuals find the support and care they need to lead happier and healthier lives.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners for their invaluable contributions and their commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve. Your support propels us forward on this journey of hope and healing.

Donors

Albert & Elaine Borchard Foundation

Annenberg Foundation

Beach Riot

Berkshire Hathaway Foundation

Big Sunday

County of Los Angeles

California Community Foundation

California State University, Northridge

CalMHSA

Chase Bank

Cedars Sinai Foundation

Community Foundations of the Valley

Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez

Department of Children and Family Services

HealthNet

HomeStreet Bank

Kroger Fresh For Everyone

LAUSD Board of Education

Los Angeles Department of Mental Health

Mother Joseph Foundation

My Walgreens

Pepperdine Graduate University

Phillips Graduate University

Pritzker Foster Care Initiative

Queenscare Foundation

Providence Holy Cross

SAMHSA

Sierra Health Foundation

S. Mark Taper Foundation

Skylight Foundation

SLTG, LLP

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

The Ahmanson Foundation

The California Wellness Foundation

The Ozzello Practice Law Firm

The Starbucks Foundation

The Ralph M. Parson Foundation

Toys for Tots

University of Southern California

Weingart Foundation

JOIN OUR MOVEMENT

Donating to a non-profit mental health organization can have a profound and positive impact on individuals and communities. Many people, including children, veterans, and those experiencing homelessness, are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues. El Centro de Amistad works to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. We do this by conducting educational workshops in schools, workplaces, and communities to promote mental health awareness and equip people with the tools they need to support themselves and others.

Donations support efforts to raise awareness, educate, and help create safe spaces for sharing, support, and healing. Join us to make a change. Together, we can help break down barriers to mental health care, improve overall well-being, and create a more compassionate and inclusive society.



1 Give

Your gift of any size matters. Consider making a tax-deductible donation to help underserved communities receive the mental health support needed. It's easy to donate. Donate now at <http://ecda.org/donation>.



2 Connect & Share

Subscribe to our newsletter to get insightful information on mental health and our impact on the community. Find us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram and LinkedIn, and subscribe to our YouTube channel.



Scan here to
make your gift.

We appreciate your commitment to mental health awareness and your engagement with our mission. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your support!

www.ecda.org



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@elcentrodeamistad



El Centro de Amistad



El Centro de Amistad Inc.



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